

JOHNNY RAY RATCHET

Veronica, is that you?

RONI

Johnny Ray?

(Johnny and Roni had been teen-age rivals. They have a love/hate relationship. She gives him a cold reception.)

JOHNNY RAY RATCHET

What are you doing here?

RONI

I work here.

JOHNNY RAY RATCHET

You're the new mechanic?

RONI

What's it to ya? You want me to tune up the Number 5?

JOHNNY RAY RATCHET

The Number 5 is running just fine, thank you.

RONI

It wasn't the last time I heard it run.

JOHNNY RAY RATCHET

Why are you talking like that? Are you still mad at me for beating you racing?

RONI

You mean that go-cart race at Peter's Playland and Pizza?

JOHNNY RAY RATCHET

Yeah, baby!

RONI

That was in the eighth grade, Johnny Ray!

JOHNNY RAY RATCHET

It don't matter. I still beat you.

RONI

You're still full of yourself, aren't you?
I'm leaving.

(She tries to leave.)

JOHNNY RAY RATCHET

(He's is apologetic.)

Wait, wait, wait, don't leave. I didn't mean all that.

RONI

What do you want?

JOHNNY RAY RATCHET

I heard what happened with the Black Beast. Did you know "The Great" Chuck Champion ran me into the wall?

RONI

That sounds just like him. I'd like to hit 'em right square in the mouth.

JOHNNY RAY RATCHET

I wish you would. I had to rehab my leg for a year 'cause of him.

(He's getting excited.)

Veronica, I'm racing on Sunday. I really do want you to look at the Number 5. I'd love to smoke that guy!

RONI

You're qualified for Talladega?

JOHNNY RAY RATCHET

Yes, I am.

RONI

Who's your crew chief?

JOHNNY RAY RATCHET

I don't have one.

RONI

Where's your pit crew?

JOHNNY RAY RATCHET

I'm using alternates.

RONI

What's your starting position?

JOHNNY RAY RATCHET

I'm way up in 43rd.

RONI
Johnny Ray, you're starting in last place!

JOHNNY RAY RATCHET
And that way nobody can pass me!

RONI
Well, at least not on the first lap.

JOHNNY RAY RATCHET
Nobody's passing me ever if you'll make my motor run. I drive fast!

RONI
(Shaking her head.)
Oh, Johnny.

JOHNNY RAY RATCHET
(Very emphatic.)
I'm just spittin' vinegar want'n to beat the Black Beast. Are you gonna help me or not?

RONI
(She pauses, takes a breath, you can see her scheming.)
Where's the Number 5?

JOHNNY RAY RATCHET
At the track.

RONI
OK. I'll look at it!

RONI and JOHNNY RAY RATCHET
Yes!!

(They give each other the high five.)

(MUSIC: #12 BACK ON THE TRACK (reprise)) << TRACK 12 >>

BACK ON THE TRACK.
BACK IN THE GAME.
LEADING THE PACK.
PEOPLE YELLING MY NAME.

BACK ON THE TRACK.
BACK IN THE GAME.
WINNING THE RACE.
WE'LL BE SPRAYING CHAMPAGNE.

THAT'S WHERE I WANT TO BE.
THAT'S WHERE I NEED TO BE.
THAT'S WHERE I BELONG.

THAT'S WHERE I WANT TO BE.
BACK WHERE MY HEART IS FREE.
ON THE TRACK,
ON THE TRACK I'M AT HOME.

(Light outs)

Scene 6

Setting: *Sunday, in the garage at the race track. Roni and Johnny Ray are working alone taking care of final adjustments to the car before he leaves for the track and she leaves to go to the tower in the pit area.*

RONI
Johnny, get out of the bathroom. I need your help!

JOHNNY RAY RATCHET
I'll be right there.

RONI
Are you combing your hair again?

JOHNNY RAY RATCHET
I'm sure I'll do some interviews. I gotta look my best!

RONI
Then look good and pull the duct tape off your fender.

JOHNNY RAY RATCHET
I can't do that. I don't want it dragging the ground.

RONI
I repaired the bracket last night. The whole chassis's fine. And, where are those alternates you promised? I need your extra tires in the pit.

JOHNNY RAY RATCHET
They'll meet us in the pit. Now quit bossing everybody around.

RONI
We're running behind. You gonna be like this all day?